

Alexandria City Council Naming Committee

Summary of Public Input on Name of New Park at Foot of King Street September-November 2018

www.alexandriava.gov/Waterfront

BACKGROUND

The Alexandria City Council Naming Committee is comprised of two members of City Council (Del Pepper and Tim Lovain) and one designee of the City Manager (Jack Browand, Division Chief in the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities). The Naming Committee meets as needed to make recommendations to City Council on the names of major City facilities, parks, and other assets.

The Waterfront Small Area Plan envisioned a new park at the foot of King Street called “Fitzgerald Square.” Although the Plan was adopted by City Council in 2012 after extensive public input, approval of the Plan did not constitute formal naming of any element in the Plan. All parks in Alexandria are subject to a formal naming process on the basis of focused public input.

NAMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Naming Committee met on September 12, 2018, to discuss a process to gather input on the name of the new park. Although intended to be a logistics meeting without public input, the Naming Committee did allow any of the approximately 30 members of the public present to speak.

The Naming Committee met again on September 27, 2018, and adopted a public input process consisting of an online survey and a public hearing. The Naming Committee received input from the approximately 10 members of the public present.

PUBLIC INPUT

The online survey was available from October 9 through November 16, 2018. The first question asked whether the new park should include the adjacent Waterfront Park or constitute a second, separate park. The second question asked what the new separate or single park should be named. The third question asked whether the respondent lived in the City of Alexandria, outside Alexandria but in the region, or outside the region. Although most respondents answered all three questions, some only chose to answer the first or the first and second. Because the survey was anonymous, answers to the self-reported residency question could not be verified.

Since survey respondents were self-selected as opposed to randomly selected, the survey should not be considered statistically representative of the entire community. It was intended to serve as a way to get ideas for the park name and not as a vote or poll. The only two naming suggestions submitted by more than five percent of respondents in any subset were variations of Fitzgerald and Waterfront. The only other names submitted by at least one percent of respondents were variations of Kerry Donley, King Street, Old Town, Parky McParkface, and Pat Troy.

Individual survey responses, including comments, accompany this summary. As shown in the table below, there were significant differences in respondents’ preferences and suggestions based on their self-reported residency, and whether they preferred separate parks or a single park.

Naming Suggestions on Online Survey				
	Fitzgerald	Waterfront	Other	None
All Respondents (1443 / 100%)	677 / 47%	146 / 10%	396 / 27%	223 / 16%
All Respondents Preferring Separate Parks (497 / 34%)	366 / 74%	0 / 0%	83 / 17%	48 / 10%
All Respondents Preferring Single Park (946 / 66%)	311 / 33%	146 / 15%	314 / 33%	175 / 18%
All City Residents (865 / 60%)	436 / 50%	115 / 13%	313 / 36%	1 / 0%
City Residents Preferring Separate Parks (287 / 33%)	219 / 76%	0 / 0%	68 / 24%	0 / 0%
City Residents Preferring Single Park (578 / 67%)	217 / 38%	115 / 20%	245 / 42%	1 / 0%
All Non-City Regional Residents (269 / 19%)	183 / 70%	26 / 10%	54 / 21%	0 / 0%
All Non-Regional Residents (46 / 3%)	35 / 76%	4 / 9%	7 / 15%	0 / 0%
All No Residency Reported (263 / 18%)	25 / 10%	1 / 0%	12 / 5%	225 / 86%
Non-City Residents Preferring Separate Parks (210 / 36%)	148 / 71%	0 / 0%	14 / 7%	48 / 23%
Non-City Residents Preferring Single Park (368 / 39%)	94 / 26%	31 / 8%	66 / 18%	177 / 48%

The Naming Committee held a public hearing on November 15, 2018, at the Charles Houston Recreation Center. Approximately 70 people were present, of which nine spoke in favor of the name Fitzgerald and 10 spoke against. Several of the 19 speakers also suggested other names or types of names. A video recording of the meeting was posted the next day at alexandriava.gov/Waterfront.

The Naming Committee solicited and received input from the Archaeological Commission, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission, and the Waterfront Commission. The City also received unsolicited input from the Ancient Order of Hibernians, The Ballyshaners, and the Slavery Inventory Database. These items of correspondence accompany this summary.

The next meeting of the Naming Committee will be held on Thursday, November 29, 2018, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., in the City Council Workroom in City Hall, for the purpose of adopting a recommendation to City Council. The Naming Committee's discussion will be based on the public input received thus far, and no additional public input is planned to be received at this meeting.